

For Immediate Release

Contact: Deborah Schneider | 415.637.3686

deborah@housingactioncoalition.org

“Affordable Homes Now” Ballot Measure Will Speed Up Affordable, Mixed-Income, and Teacher Housing Construction to Address San Francisco’s Housing Crisis

Backed by a coalition of housing, environmental, labor, and civic organizations, measure could reduce housing approval time to six months.

San Francisco – A broad coalition of pro housing advocates including **GrowSF**, **Habitat for Humanity**, **Nor Cal Carpenters Union**, **Greenbelt Alliance**, the **Housing Action Coalition**, **SPUR**, and **YIMBY Action** is seeking signatures for a charter amendment ballot initiative to accelerate housing construction and alleviate the severe housing shortage and affordability crisis in San Francisco.

The “**Affordable Homes Now**” measure, supported by Mayor London Breed, could reduce the city’s housing approval window from an average of four years to six to nine months.

The coalition will need to collect 52,000 signatures to qualify for the November 8, 2022 ballot. The deadline to qualify is July 11, 2022.

“San Francisco’s housing affordability crisis has been decades in the making and has resulted in driving out far too many lower and middle-income residents. Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco strongly supports this measure because it will create more affordable housing for our nurses, firefighters, Muni drivers, and other essential workers who need and deserve to live here,” said **Habitat for Humanity Greater Bay Area CEO Maureen Sedonaen**.

Expediting Approvals to Lower the Cost of Housing

San Francisco’s cumbersome planning, approval, and appeals process has long delayed the production of new homes, even when a housing project meets all of the City’s requirements. These unnecessary delays can cause affordable homes to take **as long as four to seven years** to secure approval while also driving up the overall cost of housing.

If enacted, the Affordable Homes Now measure would streamline the approval process for affordable housing and teacher housing so that homes for middle and lower-income San Franciscans can get built faster and at lower cost.

The measure streamlines the approvals process by allowing for ministerial approval for multi-family housing projects if:

(1) all of the homes are priced below the neighborhood market rate and are affordable to lower- and middle-income San Francisco families,"

- (2) the homes are designated for teachers and staff of San Francisco public schools and the community college district, or
- (3) the project has 10 or more homes and provides a greater number of homes affordable to low, moderate, and middle income families than required under existing City law.

To be eligible, development projects must also comply with all existing San Francisco planning and building codes, including existing zoning.

“San Francisco’s chronic housing shortage has made it practically impossible for teachers like me to afford to live where we teach. By now we’ve all heard tragic stories of teachers who are forced to sleep in their cars, or forced to leave the city, because they can’t afford housing. By making it faster and easier to build more affordable housing, Affordable Homes Now will help SF attract and retain the talented educators our schools and students need,” said **San Francisco Unified School District teacher John Lisovsky**.

Supporting a Skilled Construction Workforce

The Affordable Homes Now measure would also require that all construction workers who build streamlined development projects of at least 10 new homes must be paid family-supporting prevailing wages. Additional standards will apply to larger projects of 40 or more homes.

“The Nor Cal Carpenters Union strongly supports this important affordable housing and jobs initiative. This is a significant and meaningful way to address San Francisco’s severe housing shortage, and at the same time create new construction jobs that will pay prevailing wages, provide healthcare benefits, and create apprenticeship opportunities for residents to continue to build a diverse workforce for our city’s future,” said **Nor Cal Carpenters Union Executive Officer Jay Bradshaw**

To comply with state law, San Francisco must plan for the construction of more than 10,000 homes per year, more than double the amount that was built from 2000 to 2020.

“San Francisco’s housing crisis is not going to fix itself—we need to make it easier and more affordable to build new homes in our city. Since taking office I’ve tried multiple times to pass Affordable Homes Now through the Board of Supervisors to do just that, but it continues to be blocked year after year,” said **San Francisco Mayor London Breed**. “People continue to get priced out of our city, workers are having to commute from further and further away, and we don’t have any more time to waste as we come out of the pandemic and work to rebuild our economy. We need to pass Affordable Homes Now at the ballot box.”

“It takes far too long — and is way too unpredictable and expensive — to get desperately needed housing approved in San Francisco,” said **California State Senator Scott Wiener**. All too often, our city’s arbitrary, politicized housing process either kills projects entirely, down-sizes them (resulting in less housing), or delays them for years. We need a faster approval process for housing, one that applies our rules fairly and efficiently. Amending our city charter to prioritize housing is exactly what we need, and I support this proposal.”

"Building affordable housing near jobs and businesses is one of the most impactful ways we can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make a positive impact on both the housing and climate crises. We need to do everything we can to expedite the approval of affordable housing in places that make sense, which in turn, protects our natural lands while fostering an inclusive and sustainable Bay Area," said **Greenbelt Alliance Director of Climate Resilience Zoe Siegel**.

"More homes means more families can afford to live in San Francisco," said **GrowSF Director Steven Buss**. "Let's make our city accessible to as many new neighbors as possible by building a lot more homes."

"San Francisco voters overwhelmingly agree that our city needs far more affordable housing options and they are fed up with politicians failing to make that a priority," noted **Housing Action Coalition Executive Director Todd David**. "The Affordable Homes Now measure will go a long way toward creating more homes that residents of all income levels can afford and empowering voters to be part of the solution."

"Too many San Franciscans are being priced out of our city because housing keeps getting more expensive," said **SPUR San Francisco Director Sujata Srivastava**. "The Affordable Homes Now measure will make it easier to build homes that working families can afford."

"The labyrinthian, arbitrary process for permitting housing in San Francisco has made us a national laughing stock and driven up the cost of housing for decades," noted **YIMBY Action Executive Director Laura Foote**. "Our city's severe housing shortage is driving up rents and pushing teachers out of our communities. We can't afford to wait. We need Affordable Homes Now."

www.AffordableHomesNow.org

###